GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1845
ANSWERED ON:15.12.2003
HARMFUL EFFECTS OF BT. COTTON
SRINIVASULU KALAVA

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RDGM) has not visited æsingle site during the course of Monsantos` field trails of Bt. Cotton in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefore;

(c) whether farmers of Bt. Cotton have suffered heavy crop losses on this count; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken to protect the farmers from the harmful effects of Bt.Cotton?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV)

(a): The Monitoring − cum − Evaluation Committee (MEC) constituted by the ReviewCommittee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM) had visited Bt.cotton field trails conducted by M/s. Maharashtra Hybrids Seeds Co.Ltd., (Mahyco), from 1999 onwards.The MEC had visited 14,45,62 and 19 locations of Bt. Cotton field trails during Kharif 1999-2000, 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03 respectively.

(b): Does not arise.

(c): The realisable benefits of Bt. Technology are proportional to the level of lepidopteran pest infestation. The performance of Bt. Cotton is also dependent on agro climatic conditions, genotype of the hybrids, and management of the crop. Reports indicate that the incidence of bollworm has been less in Bt. In comparison to non Bt. Cotton resulting in reduced requirement of pesticide spray.

(d): Trials conducted by ICAR and the Department of Biotechnology have indicated that BtCotton does not have any harmful effects on environment, non-target organisms, soil micro-flora including animal health.